

What is claimed is:

1. A file browser method, comprising:  
designating a plurality of file system locations, wherein each file system location is associated with zero or more file objects; and  
displaying a superset of the file objects associated with each of the designated file system locations in a single display.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of designating is performed explicitly by a user.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the file system comprises a hierarchical file system.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the file system comprises a non-hierarchical file system.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of designating comprises designating file system locations on at least two different computer systems.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of designating comprises designating a cached file structure image as a file system location.

7. The method of claim 5, wherein the act of designating file system locations on at least two different computer systems comprises designating file system locations on at least two different computer systems communicatively coupled by a digital network.

8. The method of claim 5, wherein the act of designating file system locations on at least two different computer systems comprises designating file system locations on at least two different computer systems communicatively coupled by a personal area network.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of displaying comprises identifying those file objects present in each of the designated file system locations in a first manner and those file objects present in only one of the designated file system locations in a second manner.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the act of identifying file objects in a first manner comprises displaying said file objects in a first color and the act of identifying file objects in a second manner comprises displaying said file objects in a second color.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the act of identifying file objects in a first manner comprises displaying said file objects using a first characteristic icon and the act of identifying file objects in a second manner comprises displaying said file objects using a second characteristic icon.

12. The method of claim 9, further comprising identifying those file objects present in more than one and less than all of the designated file locations in a third manner.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the act of identifying file objects in a third manner comprises displaying said file objects in a third color.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the act of identifying file objects in a third manner comprises displaying said file objects using a third characteristic icon.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of displaying comprises visually distinguishing a first file object from a second file object based on the number of designated file system locations with which the first file object is associated compared to the number of the designated file system locations with which the second file object is associated with.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of displaying comprises visually associating information tags with at least one of the displayed file objects.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the act of visually associating information tags comprises visually associating one or more alphanumeric symbols with a displayed file object, the alphanumeric symbols identifying the number of designated file system locations associated with the file object.

18. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
selecting a displayed file object;  
issuing a command against the selected file object; and  
copying the selected file object to a specified location in each of the designated file system locations that it is not already associated with in response to the command.

19. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
selecting a file object displayed in a non-superset file-browser;  
graphically dragging and dropping the selected file object to a specified location in the designated file system locations; and  
copying the selected file object to the specified location in each of the designated file system locations in response to the act of dragging and dropping.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the act of copying comprises copying the selected file object in accordance with a specified merge policy.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the specified merge policy comprises a write-over merge policy.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the specified merge policy comprises a copy-the-latest file object merge policy.

23. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

selecting a displayed file object;

graphically dragging and dropping the selected file object to a non-superset file browser; and

creating multiple copies of the file objects represented by the selected file object in response to the act of dragging and dropping, wherein each created copy duplicates the file object represented by the selected file object in each designated location the file object is located.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the act of creating multiple copies further comprises organizing each created copy in a separate directory, said directory indicating the designated location from which the copy was created.

25. A computer readable storage device comprising instructions for causing a computer to permit a user to:

designate a plurality of file system locations, wherein each file system location is associated with zero or more file objects; and

display the superset of the file objects associated with each of the file system locations in a single display.

26. The storage device of claim 25, wherein the instructions to designate a plurality of file system locations comprise instructions to permit a user to explicitly designate said plurality of file system locations.

27. The storage device of claim 25, wherein the instructions to designate a plurality of file system locations comprise instructions to select one or more default file system locations.

28. The storage device of claim 25, wherein the instructions to designate comprise instructions to designate file system locations on at least two different computer systems.

29. The storage device of claim 25, wherein the instructions to designate comprise instructions to designate a cached file structure image as a file system location.

30. The storage device of claim 25, wherein the instructions to designate comprise instructions to designate a non-hierarchical file system location.

31. The storage device of claim 25, wherein the instructions to display comprise instructions to identify those file objects present in all of the designated file system locations in a first manner and those file objects present in only one of the designated file system locations in a second manner.



32. The storage device of claim 31, wherein the instructions to identify file objects in a first manner comprise instructions to display said file objects in a first color and the instructions to identify file objects in a second manner comprise instructions to display said file objects in a second color.

33. The storage device of claim 31, further comprising instructions to identify file objects present in more than one and less than all of the designated file locations in a third manner.

34. The storage device of claim 33, wherein the instructions to identify file objects in a third manner comprise instructions to display said file objects in a third color.

35. The storage device of claim 25, wherein the instructions to display comprise instructions to visually associate information tags with at least one of the displayed file objects.

36. The storage device of claim 35, wherein the instructions to visually associate information tags comprise instructions to visually associate one or more alphanumeric symbols with a displayed file object, the alphanumeric symbols identifying the number of designated file system locations associated with the file object.

37. The storage device of claim 25, further comprising instructions to:  
    permit a user to select a displayed file object;  
    permit the user to issue a command against the selected file object; and  
    copy the selected file object to a specified location in each of the designated file system locations that it is not already associated with in response to the command.

38. The storage device of claim 25, further comprising instructions to:  
    permit a user to select a file object displayed in a non-superset file-browser;  
    permit the user to graphically drag and drop the selected file object to a specified location in the designated file system locations; and  
    copy the selected file object to the specified location in each of the designated file system locations in response to the drag and drop operation.

39. The storage device of claim 38, wherein the instructions to copy comprise instructions to copy the selected file object in accordance with a specified merge policy.

40. A computer system, comprising:

a central processing unit;  
a memory operatively coupled to the central processing unit;  
a computer network connection operatively coupled to the central processing unit;  
a display unit operatively coupled to the central processing unit and the memory;  
and  
a storage device, operatively coupled to the central processing unit and the memory, said storage device having instructions stored thereon for causing the central processing unit to:

display, on the display unit, a file-browser application,  
designate a plurality of file system locations, wherein each file system location is associated with zero or more file objects, and  
display, in the file-browser application, a superset of the file objects associated with each of the file system locations.

41. The computer system of claim 40, wherein the instructions to designate comprise instructions to designate file system locations on at least two different computer systems.

42. The computer system of claim 40, wherein the instructions to designate comprise instructions to designate a non-hierarchical file system location.

43. The computer system of claim 40, wherein the instructions to designate comprise instructions to require a user to explicitly designate at least one of the plurality of file system locations.

44. The computer system of claim 40, wherein the instructions to display comprise instructions to graphically identify those file objects present in all of the designated file system locations in a first manner and all those file objects present in only one of the designated file system locations in a second manner.

45. The computer system of claim 44, further comprising instructions to graphically identify those file objects present in more than one of the designated file locations and less than all of the designated file locations in a third manner.

46. The computer system of claim 40, wherein the instructions to display comprise instructions to visually associate information tags with at least one of the displayed file objects.

47. The computer system of claim 40, further comprising instructions to:  
    permit a user to select a displayed file object;  
    permit the user to issue a command against the selected file object; and  
    copy the selected file object to a specified location in each of the designated file system locations that it is not already associated with in response to the command.

48. The computer system of claim 40, further comprising instructions to:

- permit a user to select a file object displayed in a second file-browser;
- permit the user to graphically drag and drop the selected file object to a specified location in the designated file system locations; and
- copy the selected file object to the specified location in each of the designated file system locations in response to the drag and drop operation.

49. In a computer network of a type including at least two devices, wherein each device presents a file system, each of said file systems comprising one or more locations, each of said one or more locations associated with zero or more file system objects, a method for displaying a superset of file system objects, comprising:

- specifying a file system location on each of the at least two devices; and
- displaying the set union of the file system objects located at each of the specified file system locations.

50. The method of claim 49, wherein the act of specifying comprises a user specifying at least one of the file system locations explicitly.

51. The method of claim 49, wherein the act of specifying comprises using a default location in at least one of the at least two file systems.

52. The method of claim 49, wherein at least one of the specified file system locations comprises a location in a hierarchically organized file system.

53. The method of claim 49, wherein at least one of the specified file system locations comprises a location in a non-hierarchically organized file system.

54. The method of claim 49, wherein the computer network comprises a personal area network.

55. The method of claim 49, wherein the act of specifying comprises specifying a cached file structure image as a file system location.

56. The method of claim 49, further comprising:  
selecting a file system object from the displayed set union of file system objects;  
and  
copying the selected file system object to a designated location in each of the  
specified file system locations that it is not already associated with.

57. The method of claim 49, further comprising:  
selecting a file system object displayed in accordance with a non-superset file-  
browser application;  
graphically dragging and dropping the selected file system object to a designated  
location in the displayed set union of file system objects; and  
copying the selected file system object to the designated location in each of the  
specified file system locations.

58. The method of claim 57, wherein the act of copying comprises copying the  
selected file system object in accordance with a merge policy.



59. The method of claim 49, further comprising:  
displaying a file system location in a non-superset file-browser application;  
selecting a file system object from the displayed set union of file system objects;  
graphically dragging and dropping the selected file system object onto the file  
system location displayed in the non-superset file-browser application; and  
creating multiple copies of the selected file system object at the file system  
location displayed in the non-superset file-browser application, wherein each created  
copy duplicates an object represented by the selected file system object in each  
specified location the file system object is located.

60. The method of claim 59, wherein the act of creating the multiple copies further  
comprises organizing each created copy in a separate directory, said directory indicating  
the specified location from which the copy was created.

61. The method of claim 49, wherein the act of displaying comprises visually  
distinguishing a first file system object from a second file system object based on the  
number of the specified file system locations the first file system object is associated  
with relative to the number of the specified file system locations the second file system  
object is associated with.

62. The method of claim 49, wherein the act of displaying comprises visually associating information tags with at least one of the displayed file system objects.

63. The method of claim 49, wherein the act of displaying file system objects comprises displaying an icon representing a file object.

64. The method of claim 63, wherein the act of displaying file system objects further comprises displaying an icon representing a directory object.

65. A computer readable program storage device comprising instructions stored therein for causing a computer to:

- specify a file system location on each of at least two computers; and
- display the set union of file system objects located at each of the specified file system locations.

66. The program storage device of claim 65, wherein at least one of the file system locations comprise a hierarchically organized file system.

67. The program storage device of claim 65, wherein at least one of the file system locations comprise a non-hierarchically organized file system.

68. The program storage device of claim 65, wherein the instructions to specify comprise instructions to permit a user to explicitly designate at least one file system location.

69. The program storage device of claim 65, wherein the instructions to specify comprise instructions to use at least one default file system location.

70. The program storage device of claim 65, further comprising instructions to:  
    permit a user to select a file system object from the displayed set union of file system objects; and  
    copy the selected file system object to a designated location in each of the specified file system locations that it is not already associated with.

71. The program storage device of claim 65, further comprising instructions to:  
permit a user to select a file system object displayed in accordance with a non-superset file-browser application;

permit the user to graphically drag the selected file system object to a designated location in the displayed set union of file system objects; and

copy the selected file object to the designated location in each of the specified file system locations.

72. The program storage device of claim 71, wherein the instructions to copy comprise instructions to copy the selected file object in accordance with a merge policy.

73. The program storage device of claim 65, further comprising instructions to:

- display a file system location in a non-superset file-browser application;
- permit a user to select a file system object from the displayed set union of file system objects;
- permit the user to graphically drag and drop the selected file system object onto the file system location displayed in the non-superset file-browser application; and
- create multiple copies of the selected file system object at the file system location displayed in the non-superset file-browser application, wherein each created copy duplicates an object represented by the displayed file system object in each specified location the file system object is located.

74. The program storage device of claim 73, wherein the instructions to create the multiple copies further comprise instructions to organize each created copy in a separate directory, said directory indicating the specified file system location from which the copy was created.

75. The program storage device of claim 65, wherein the instructions to display comprise instructions to visually distinguish a first file system object from a second file system object based on the number of the specified file system locations the first file system object is associated with relative to the number of the specified file system locations the second file system object is associated with.

76. The program storage device of claim 65, wherein the instructions to display comprise instructions to visually associate information tags with at least one of the displayed file system objects.